Dispersing Information: A Balancing Act

The History of Dr. George Wilson Albee 1921-2006

We will miss George Albee. July 8, Albee died at his home on Longboat Key where he had lived for 14 years. Not only was he full of life and involved actively in his community, he was known for his work in the field of psychology and was an author of two important books in his field, Primary Prevention Works, and Improving Children’s Lives.

Albee was in charge of the task force on the new Veterans Administration Clinical Psychology Program. He received his Ph.D. from Bethany College, West Virginia in 1943 and then spent three years in the Air Force. In 1946, Albee entered graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh. That fall he was among the first students to receive the graduate degree in psychology. He received his Ph.D. in psychology in 1950 and taught in the next two years in a research appointment at Western Psychiatric Institute.

In 1951, Albee went to Washington to work for the American Psychological Association as executive secretary. He was later named executive secretary of APA in 1956 and in 1958 he became the George Trumbull Ladd Distinguished Professor of Psychology. During his 16 years at the APA he new in charge of the department on three occasions and was director of the clinical program. He has been actively on a campaign to change the tide, and to slide back the moratorium. He could also be viewed as the stopgap used by the state Supreme Court to continue a moratorium. Last week, those in the information-gathering business received a swift kick to the gut. They had been promised by the state that on July 1, 2006 a moratorium would be lifted and court records would be accessible electronically and over the Internet. Instead, they were told by Chief Justice R. Fred Lewis that they were going to have to cool their heels a little longer until they felt court information would not threaten privacy interests.

In 2004, state legislators and judges were going to close the open gates to electronic access to non-confidential court records until a committee could say that a policy could be nailed down to insure that a philosophy of ‘openness and transparency in court records’ could be balanced with the philosophy of ‘individual privacy.’

The 2004 legislative determination changed the world somewhat for many in business, law, government, and real estate investors to name a few. In a letter to the clerk of the Supreme Court, Thomas Dale Hall, Shore urged a lifting of the moratorium. He found it expensive and time intensive. Circuit courts were getting bogged down by an increased need to handle paper documents.

Hundreds of government users now were approaching the counter. Karl Youngs, counsel for the clerk of the circuit courts, said he had employees now coming in to make copies and access paper records. In 2004, he said a great deal of the court records were provided elec-...